

£750 NOTEBOOKS

INTRODUCTION

You can buy an entry-level notebook for as little as £400. But unless you'll use it only for very modest tasks, such as web browsing and word processing, you'll benefit from spending a little more on a notebook that will give you years of service. You may want to invest in a model that's faster in Windows and games and has a longer-lasting battery, a bigger hard disk, more comfortable input devices or a better display.

As you'll see, you can get all this and more without having to take out a second mortgage. This month we've gathered together nine superior notebooks, none of which costs more than £750 including VAT. No matter what you want from a notebook, we'll help you get the best possible model for your hard-earned cash.

Alan Lu

PC systems and
storage expert

alan@computershopper.co.uk



WE WANT IT ALL

You can get a cheaper notebook, but spending £750 means no need to compromise. We test nine laptops that have it all

Choosing a... £750 Notebook

You shouldn't need to make many compromises when paying £750 for a notebook, but it's still worth bearing in mind what you want to do with it to get the computer that's best suited for your needs.

DIFFERENT VISTAS

All but one of the notebooks on test comes with either Windows Vista Home Premium or Vista Business. These two versions share many features, such as the Aero interface, but Home Premium includes Media Center for browsing your media library, while Business can control other PCs on your network. For more information on the differences, visit <http://tinyurl.com/3843r3>.

The exception is the MacBook, which uses Apple's own operating system, MacOS X 10.4 Tiger. MacOS X works broadly like Vista so it's not hard to learn. You can also install Windows XP or Vista on the MacBook using Apple's Boot Camp utility. This is currently free, but you'll have to pay for it when it becomes part of the next version of OS X, 10.5, which is due in October.

WEIGHTY MATTERS

If your notebook will rarely stray from your desk, weight and battery life are less important considerations, but they're essential if you want to take it on your travels.

The larger the notebook's display, the heavier it tends to be. Dell's Inspiron, with a 15.4in screen, weighs just over 3kg while Toshiba's 13.3in Satellite weighs less than 2kg. Both Sony's Vaio and Mesh's PR600 are fairly light for 15.4in notebooks at 2.6kg. Lenovo's 2.4kg 14.1in ThinkPad is a good compromise between display size and weight. The dimensions and weight of each notebook are listed on the table on page 82.

We'd expect a notebook at this price to last at least two and a half hours in our light usage test. All the notebooks exceeded this, apart from PC Nextday's Zoostorm. The MacBook lasted for four hours – enough for an afternoon's worth of work.

IRREPLACEABLE

Unlike a desktop PC, you can't replace a notebook's input devices and display unless you use a set of external desk-bound substitutes. These components are often overlooked, but are important if you don't want to strain your eyes or your hands. We've cast a critical eye over each notebook's display. All are suitable for everyday tasks, but some are not ideal for colour-sensitive work such as image and video editing.

Display sizes range from 13.3in to 15.4in, but almost all the notebooks here have the same resolution of





1,280x800 pixels. The exception is HP's 15.4in Compaq 6715b, with its 1,680x1,050 resolution – ideal for applications with lots of windows, expansive spreadsheets and panoramic photos.

Most of the notebooks in this group have glossy displays, which are great for watching movies as they make colours appear brighter and richer compared with non-glossy screens. Unfortunately, the gloss finish also reflects light from overhead sources such as office lighting, which can be distracting. The screens on the Inspiron, the ThinkPad and the Compaq have a matt anti-glare finish instead.

Keyboards should be spacious, with firm keys that provide plenty of feedback. The ThinkPad has the best keyboard in this group. Touch pads should be large and accurate with responsive buttons. Acer's TravelMate has the best here.

TWO OF EVERYTHING

Six of the notebooks on test have 2GB of RAM, which is useful for running several programs at once or for memory-intensive tasks such as manipulating large photos. Three came with only 1GB of RAM, which is fine for everyday use.

All the notebooks on test have a dual-core processor. Eight have an Intel Core 2 Duo, but the Compaq uses an AMD Turion 64 X2. While the Compaq has 2GB of RAM, Intel-based notebooks with just 1GB were able to match or overtake it. See the full test results on page 81.

NEVER-ENDING STORAGE

A small hard disk can mean you have to resort to an external disk to store your files, which is inconvenient if you travel with your notebook. Most of the notebooks in this group have 120GB or 160GB disks, which is enough for Windows, your programs and a small collection of video, music and photos. The Zoostorm has a huge 250GB Western Digital Scorpio notebook drive, which uses perpendicular recording, and makes the MacBook's 80GB disk look positively pokey.

Notebooks that rely on an integrated graphics chip, such as Intel's GMA series, aren't powerful enough to play the latest graphically detailed games. Unless you're content with older titles, go for a notebook with a dedicated graphics chip. In this group, only the Inspiron and the Zoostorm could run our demanding 3D graphics test at a smooth frame rate.

EXPANSION

Most of the notebooks have either a CardBus or an ExpressCard expansion card slot, except for the MacBook, which has none at all, and the TravelMate, which has both. CardBus is slowly being phased out in favour of ExpressCard, but plenty of CardBus peripherals are still available.

ExpressCards come in two sizes: ExpressCard/54 and ExpressCard/34. ExpressCard/54 slots can accept both cards. Only Sony's Vaio has the smaller ExpressCard/34 slot.

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PC NEXTDAY Zoostorm 4-6623 Advanced Premium Laptop

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SONY Vaio VGN-FZ19VN

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TOSHIBA Satellite U300-113

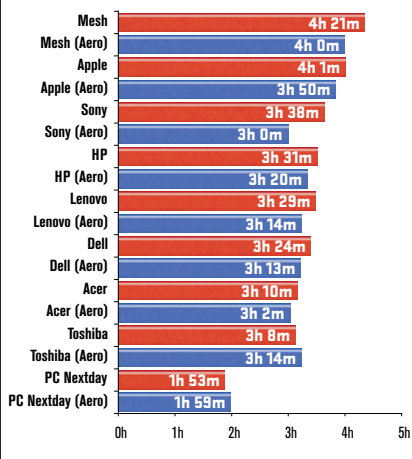
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Aero and battery life

Windows Vista's Aero interface looks slick, but it requires a recent graphics chip such as Intel's GMA 950. We ran our light-usage battery test twice on each notebook – once under Aero and once with the Windows Classic theme – to see if it has any effect.

We found that Aero's effect varies. The Acer lasted eight minutes less under Aero and the Sony 38 minutes less, while the PC Nextday and Toshiba notebooks lasted six minutes longer with Aero enabled.





ACER TravelMate 5720G

★★★★

£650 inc VAT

Acer's TravelMate 5720G is a decent notebook but it struggles to stand out in this group.

FEATURES

The TravelMate is the only notebook here with a curved ergonomic keyboard, but the smiley shape isn't so different that touch typists will have to retrain. It's comfortable to use but the keys aren't as responsive as those on the ThinkPad. The large touch pad is sensitive and the buttons have plenty of feedback.

The TravelMate looks grey and businesslike but its glossy screen isn't ideal for use under office lights. Although image quality wasn't flawless, it's still one of the better displays in this group. Most colours looked bright and evenly lit, but white areas had a greyish cast. There was also some coarseness in the darker shades of our greyscale transition test.

You won't need an adaptor to attach an external monitor as the TravelMate has DVI and D-sub sockets – the only notebook here to do so. It's also the only notebook in the group with both CardBus and ExpressCard/54 slots.

PERFORMANCE

The TravelMate is one of the first notebooks we've seen with ATI's new Mobility Radeon X2500 graphics chip, but it's not particularly powerful, scoring just 10fps in our Call of Duty 2 test. At least it doesn't share system memory as the integrated chips in other notebooks do.

We were more impressed by its performance in our Windows benchmarks. Here it was one of the faster notebooks in the group, although it fell behind in our image-editing test. It lasted a respectable three hours and ten minutes in our battery test, but most of the other notebooks lasted even longer.

VERDICT

The TravelMate is sturdy, fast in Windows and has some useful expansion slots, but it's outclassed by other notebooks in this group, which have more responsive keyboards, faster 3D performance and longer-lasting batteries.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Both ExpressCard/54 and CardBus slots
- ✓ Sturdy case
- ✗ Heavy

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7300, 2GB RAM, 160GB disk, ATI Mobility Radeon X2500 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.9kg
PART CODE LX.TK30X.033
SUPPLIER www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
DETAILS www.acer.co.uk



APPLE 2.0GHz MacBook

★★★★

£695 inc VAT

Apple's stylish MacBook is well-designed but underspecified.

FEATURES

The MacBook's glossy white chassis is sleek and sturdy but gets dirty easily. The charger has a magnetic connector that disconnects harmlessly if someone trips over the cable rather than dragging the notebook to the floor.

We were disappointed by the 80GB hard disk and the lack of a DVD writer – the Combo drive writes CDs but only reads DVDs. There's no memory card reader or modem either.

We were happier with the input devices. The spacious keyboard is responsive, although the Return key is a bit small. The touch pad is accurate under MacOS X but imprecise under Windows due to Apple's beta Windows drivers.

The glossy 13.3in widescreen display is almost painfully bright. It has plenty of contrast and white areas are evenly lit but there was speckling in our greyscale and colour transitions tests. Photo editors may prefer to attach an external monitor, but they'll need an adaptor for the proprietary mini-DVI port.

Extras include a remote for browsing media files in Apple's Media Center-like Front Row software. Apple's bundled iLife music, movie, DVD, photo and website creation software can produce surprisingly professional results.

PERFORMANCE

The MacBook isn't quite the lightest notebook here, but it's well suited to working on the move with its battery life of over four hours. Even with only 1GB of RAM it performed respectably in our Windows benchmarks, although some memory will be used by the integrated Intel graphics chip, which isn't powerful enough for demanding 3D games.

VERDICT

Apple's MacBook has a well-designed case and one of longest-lasting batteries in this group, but it's not great value thanks to its small hard disk and the lack of a DVD writer.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Light and well designed; long battery life
- ✗ Small hard disk
- ✗ No DVD writer

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7200, 1GB RAM, 80GB disk, Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950 graphics, DVD-ROM/CD-RW, 13.3in widescreen LCD, 2.3kg
PART CODE MB061B/A
SUPPLIER www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
DETAILS www.apple.com/uk/macbook



DELL Inspiron 1520

★★★★★

£749 inc VAT



Dell's Inspiron 1520 produced the best 3D performance of any notebook in this group, but it's quite heavy.

FEATURES

The Inspiron is the heaviest notebook in this group at just over 3kg, so it's not difficult to transport. While it feels robust, it's also chunkier than the other notebooks. Our review unit's rubber-textured lid was a light green colour, but other shades are available.

The spacious keyboard isn't as responsive as the ThinkPad's, but is firm and comfortable to type on. The touch pad is accurate although the buttons feel indistinct and don't provide as much feedback as the TravelMate's.

Office workers will appreciate the display's matt anti-glare finish. It's not particularly suitable for colour-sensitive image editing, though. Colours looked a little washed out and colour accuracy diminished at off-centre viewing angles. Our greyscale and colour transition tests looked fairly smooth.

PERFORMANCE

Thanks to its GeForce 8600M GT graphics chip, the Inspiron managed a smooth 26.5fps in our demanding Call of Duty 2 test. The Inspiron is capable of playing the latest 3D games but if you want even higher frame rates, you'll have to settle for less detail in graphics.

The Inspiron was also the fastest notebook in our multitasking test and one of the fastest in all our other benchmarks so it will be able to handle all but the toughest computing tasks. It also did well in our light usage battery test, lasting just under three and a half hours.

VERDICT

If you want a notebook that's powerful enough to play the latest games, the Inspiron 1520 is the one to get. We wish it wasn't so heavy and that the display's colour-accuracy was better, but the Inspiron is still one of the best notebooks in this Labs.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Good 3D performance
- ✓ Comfortable keyboard
- ✗ Heavy

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7100, 2GB RAM, 160GB disk, Nvidia GeForce 8600M GT graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 3.1kg
E-VALUE CODE N0915207T
SUPPLIER Dell 0870 907 5683
DETAILS www.dell.co.uk



HP
Compaq 6715b
Business Notebook

★★★★
£680 inc VAT

The Compaq has the highest-resolution screen, but it's not good enough for image editing.

FEATURES

Unlike the other notebooks in this group with 15.4in screens, the Compaq's has a resolution of 1,680x1,050 pixels. This is enough space to work on two documents side by side, but the image quality left us wanting. White areas were gloomy and colours oversaturated. There was noticeable coarseness in darker shades of our greyscale transitions test, and while the screen is fine for office work, it isn't well suited to colour-sensitive photo manipulation.

We were also disappointed by the keyboard. It's spacious, but it felt springier and less responsive than previous models, so extended typing could be tiring. The large touch pad is accurate but the buttons lack feedback. The plain black and grey case feels robust, although the lid flexes under pressure.

PERFORMANCE

The Compaq is the only notebook here to use an AMD processor. With 2GB of RAM, the Compaq did well in our memory-intensive image-editing and multitasking tests but was outpaced by Intel notebooks with half the RAM in our video-encoding benchmark, which benefits more from a powerful processor.

As expected, the integrated ATI graphics chip isn't powerful enough to play the latest 3D games. Although it didn't have the longest battery life in this group, the Compaq lasted three hours and 31 minutes in light use.

VERDICT

The Compaq's high-resolution screen is useful when working with several applications simultaneously but you'll have to put up with its disappointing image quality and the spongy keyboard. Unless you need the high-resolution screen, Dell's Inspiron is faster in Windows and has a more responsive keyboard.

SUMMARY

- ✓ High-resolution screen
- ✗ Disappointing display
- ✗ Spongy keyboard

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-60, 2GB RAM, 160GB disk, ATI Radeon Xpress 1270 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.8kg
PART CODE GB835ET
SUPPLIER www.hp.co.uk
DETAILS www.hp.co.uk



LENOVO
ThinkPad R61
77321EG

★★★★★
£700 inc VAT

BEST BUY Lenovo's 1980s-style ThinkPad may look a little old-fashioned, but with decent battery life and a robust chassis, it's still a desirable notebook.

FEATURES

The ThinkPad's chunky matt-black design is a far cry from the sleek designs of most recent notebooks. It feels very robust though.

Its keyboard is the most comfortable in this group – the keys feel firm but give plenty of feedback. The ThinkPad's trademark touch stick pointing device requires practice, but you can use the more accurate touch pad instead.

A light above the display illuminates the keyboard for working in low light, but it's not very bright. We were more disappointed with the quality of the ThinkPad's 14.1in screen. Most colours were even but white areas had a grey cast and there was speckling in our greyscale test. It's not ideal for precise image editing. Our review unit also had a stuck pixel.

PERFORMANCE

Unlike most notebooks in the group, the ThinkPad has only 1GB of RAM, so it fell behind in our memory-intensive image-editing and multitasking tests. Its Core 2 Duo T7100 did better in our video-encoding test, which depends more on processor speed than RAM.

As expected, the integrated graphics chip isn't capable of playing the latest games, although it can handle less demanding titles.

Battery life was decent at just under three and a half hours.

VERDICT

Lenovo's ThinkPad R61 is a sturdy notebook with an excellent keyboard and is fairly light at 2.4kg. It fell behind in some of our performance benchmarks, but it's still an excellent alternative to Dell's Inspiron if you don't play games and want a lighter computer.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Excellent keyboard
- ✓ Light but sturdy case
- ✗ Only 1GB of RAM

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7100, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 14.1in widescreen LCD, 2.4kg
PART CODE NAO1EUK
SUPPLIER www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
DETAILS www.lenovo.com/uk



MESH
PR600

★★★★
£749 inc VAT

Mesh's PR600 is quick in Windows and has great battery life, but is let down by its poor quality display and keyboard.

FEATURES

Although the PR600 doesn't feel particularly sturdy, it is lighter than many of the other 15.4in notebooks in this group, weighing only 2.6kg. The image quality of the glossy 15.4in widescreen display makes it unsuitable for editing photos. Colours looked uneven, with the top edge of the screen darker than the bottom edge, while white areas looked gloomy. Images were grainy, which was especially noticeable in our greyscale transitions test.

The PR600 is the only notebook in the group with a numeric keypad. Unfortunately the keyboard isn't much larger than those on the other notebooks here, so some keys, such as the cursor keys, are small and hard to press. The layout makes it easy to hit the Insert key when reaching for the Delete key or to brush against the touch pad while typing. The squishy keys lack feedback, making extended periods of typing tiresome. At least the touch pad is accurate and its buttons feel firm and responsive.

PERFORMANCE

We were more impressed by the PR600's performance in our application benchmarks. It did consistently well in all our Windows tests, especially our multiple applications benchmark where it tied with the Inspiron for first place.

The battery lasted an impressive four hours and 21 minutes, the longest in this group. As expected, it couldn't even run our Call of Duty 2 test. If you want to play the latest games, this isn't the notebook for you.

VERDICT

The PR600 is fast in Windows and has the longest battery life in this group. Sadly, its poor keyboard and display make it uncomfortable to use, so we can't recommend it wholeheartedly.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Long battery life; fast and fairly light
- ✗ Poorly designed keyboard
- ✗ Disappointing display

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7100, 2GB RAM, 160GB disk, Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.6kg
PART CODE PR600
SUPPLIER Mesh 0844 736 0440
DETAILS www.meshcomputers.com



PC NEXTDAY Zoostorm 4-6623 Advanced Premium Laptop

★★★★★

£699 inc VAT

The Zoostorm has a generous specification but is ill-suited to working away from home.

FEATURES

We're used to notebooks having less storage space than desktop PCs, but the Zoostorm's 250GB hard disk rivals the capacity of many deskbound PCs. It's ideal if you have a large collection of MP3s, videos and photos and don't want to store them on an external disk.

The Zoostorm's keyboard is large and well spaced, but it feels springy and isn't as responsive as those on the ThinkPad or the Satellite, so extended typing sessions could be tiring. The touch pad isn't very large but is accurate, with firm, responsive buttons.

Movie fans will appreciate the bright, glossy widescreen display, despite some coarseness in our colour and greyscale transitions tests. White areas looked greyish, and it can't match the Toshiba Satellite's screen for image quality, but it's one of the better screens in this group.

PERFORMANCE

The Zoostorm has the fastest Core 2 Duo processor in this group, so it's no surprise that it came top in almost all our Windows benchmarks – Dell's Inspiron edged ahead in our multitasking test. The Zoostorm should be able to handle all but the most strenuous tasks.

The GeForce 8600M GS graphics chip isn't as powerful as the Inspiron's 8600M GT, but it managed 17.2fps in Call of Duty 2, so you can play the latest games with reduced detail. Sadly, the Zoostorm's battery life of less than two hours makes it unsuitable for mobile use.

VERDICT

If you need a powerful notebook for use in the home, the Zoostorm is a good choice. Dell's Inspiron has a smaller hard disk but is quicker in games and has better battery life.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Huge hard disk
- ✓ Fast in Windows and games
- ✗ Short battery life

GENERAL PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7500, 2GB RAM, 250GB disk, Nvidia GeForce Go 8600M GS graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.8kg
PART CODE Zoostorm 4-6623
SUPPLIER www.pcnextday.co.uk
DETAILS www.pcnextday.co.uk



SONY Vaio VGN-FZ19VN

★★★★★

£750 inc VAT

Sony's Vaio is lighter than many of the 15.4in notebooks here, but is no less feature packed.

FEATURES

At 2.6kg, the Vaio is a few hundred grams lighter than other 15.4in notebooks we've seen, although it's not as light or as compact as the Satellite, which has a smaller screen. The glossy widescreen display is suitable for watching movies and editing photos. Colours looked rich and bright, and white areas were evenly lit and free of any colour cast. There was some speckling in our colour transitions test, but it's still one of the better displays in this group.

The Vaio's widely spaced keyboard is comfortable to type on, but the keys don't provide as much resistance and feedback as those on the ThinkPad and Satellite keyboards. More disappointingly, the touch pad can be frustratingly inaccurate, although the buttons are firm and responsive, at least. Like other Sony computers we've seen, the Vaio comes with a generous software bundle including Adobe Photoshop Elements, Adobe Premiere Elements and Adobe Acrobat for creating PDFs.

PERFORMANCE

Like the other notebooks in this group with chipset-integrated graphics, the Vaio isn't powerful enough to play the latest 3D games. It's more than capable of running demanding Windows applications, though, and produced good scores in all our 2D tests.

The Vaio did well in our light-use battery test, lasting three hours and 38 minutes. Although it didn't last as long as the MacBook, it's a good choice if you need to work away from a power socket.

VERDICT

If you need a 15.4in display but don't want to haul around a heavy notebook, the Vaio is very attractive. If the Dell's 3D performance doesn't interest you, the Sony is a good alternative, and its only real weakness is the touch pad.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Fairly light
- ✓ Generous software bundle
- ✗ Inaccurate touch pad

GENERAL-PURPOSE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T7100, 2GB RAM, 120GB disk, Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 15.4in widescreen LCD, 2.6kg
PART CODE VGNFZ19VN.CEK
SUPPLIER www.laptopsdirect.co.uk
DETAILS <http://vaio.sony.co.uk>



TOSHIBA Satellite U300-113

★★★★★

£700 inc VAT

Toshiba's Satellite U300-113 is compact and attractive but disappoints in some key areas.

FEATURES

The Satellite weighs only 2kg and is stylish too, with a black and silver chassis and an attractive dark blue lid. Although the compact keyboard means some keys, such as the left Shift and function keys, are a bit small, it is comfortable to use. The keys are responsive with plenty of feedback and are a pleasure to type on. Sadly, the small touch pad feels irritatingly jittery and isn't very accurate. The touch pad buttons are stiff and hard to press too.

We were more impressed with the U300's 13.3in screen. Areas of white looked bright with no colour cast. Other colours looked rich and evenly lit. It's not perfect, though; we noticed some coarseness in our greyscale and colour transitions tests. Still, it's one of the best notebook displays we've seen recently.

PERFORMANCE

As expected, the integrated Intel graphics are unsuitable for playing the latest 3D games. The 1.66GHz Core 2 Duo T5450 is the slowest Intel processor in this group and there's only 1GB of RAM. As a result, the Satellite couldn't keep up with the other notebooks in our benchmarks, so if you need the fastest possible performance on the move, the U300 isn't for you.

A slim notebook offers little advantage over a larger, heavier one if it has a short battery life, as you're still tethered to a power socket. The U300 lasted just over three hours in our light use test, which is long enough for a short-haul flight. The MacBook lasted an hour longer though, so there's room for improvement.

VERDICT

At £700, the Satellite is inexpensive for such a compact notebook. We liked its quality display and responsive keyboard, but if you travel regularly, the relatively short battery life and poor touch pad are less than ideal.

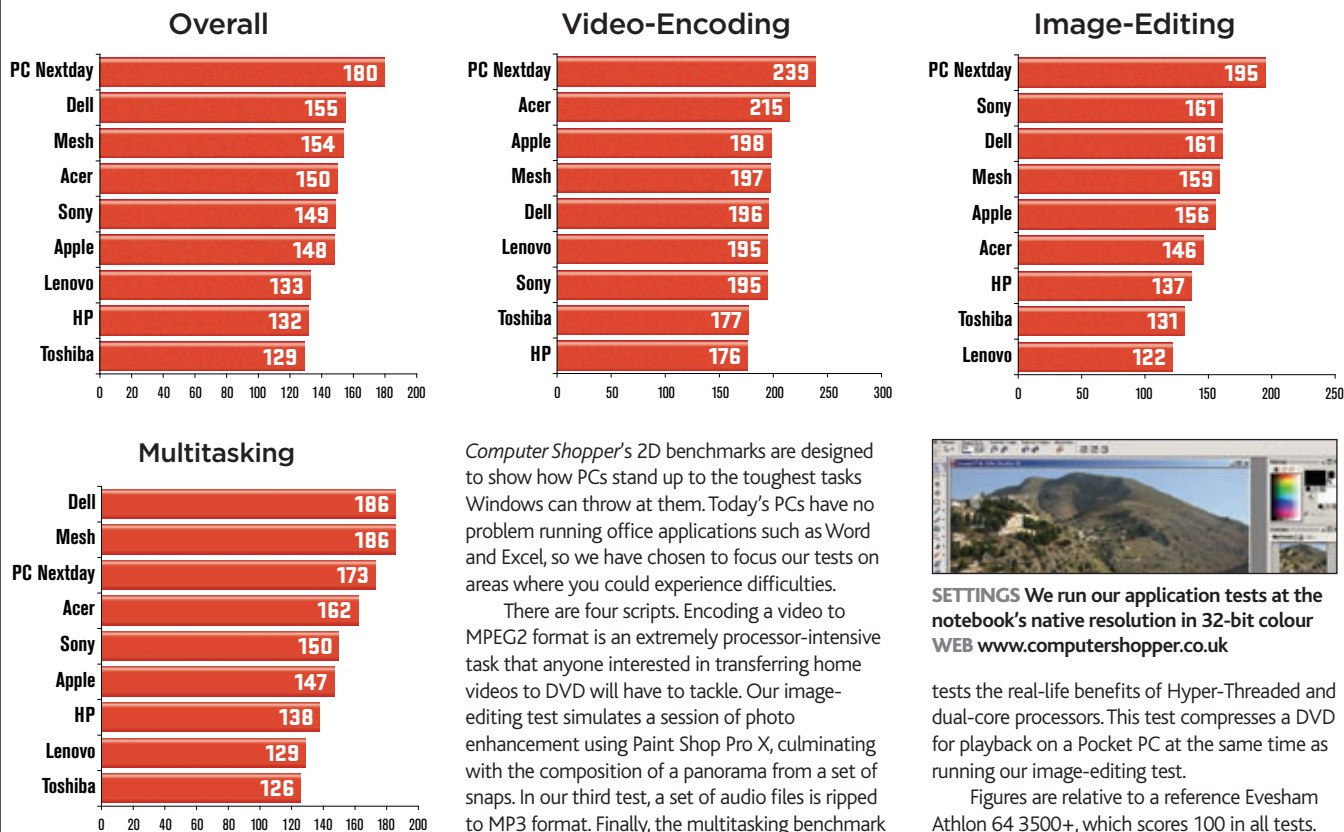
SUMMARY

- ✓ Light, with a good keyboard and display
- ✗ Disappointing touch pad
- ✗ Poor performance

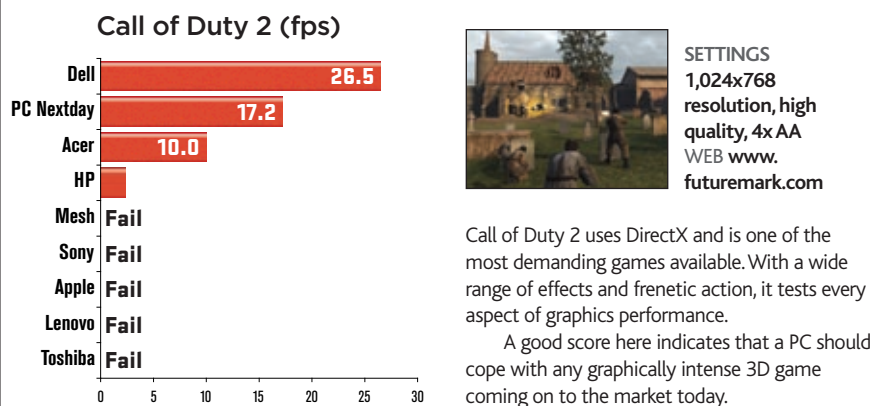
ULTRA-PORTABLE NOTEBOOK Intel Core 2 Duo T5450, 1GB RAM, 120GB disk, Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100 graphics, DVD+/-RW +/-DL, 13.3in widescreen LCD, 2.0kg
PART CODE PSU30E-01T029EN
SUPPLIER www.askdirect.co.uk
DETAILS eu.computers.toshiba-europe.com

BENCHMARKS

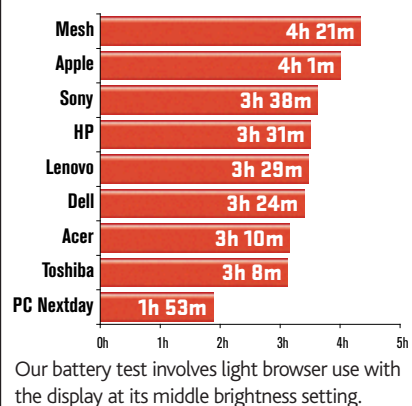
2D Performance Shopper application tests



3D Performance Call of Duty 2



Battery life Run time



Labs verdict £750 notebooks

We were pleasantly surprised by the variety of notebooks in this month's Labs. However, only a few struck the right balance between features, battery life and performance.

Apple's MacBook has the second-longest battery life in the group and is well designed, but it has a cramped hard disk and no DVD writer for backing up files.

PC Nextday's Zoostorm is worth considering if you want a powerful notebook for the home, but its battery life is very short, so it's not good for use on the road.

The best notebooks here offer truly portable power. Dell's Inspiron 1520 is heavier than average but it has a powerful 3D graphics chip, is quick in Windows and lasted almost three and a half hours in our battery test. It has something for everyone and is a real bargain if you're into games. It wins our Best Buy award.

Non-gamers should consider the Sony and Lenovo notebooks. The Sony has a better display and more RAM, but the Lenovo wins with its sturdy build and the best keyboard in the group. It's our Best Buy for business use.





MANUFACTURER	ACER	APPLE	DELL	HP
Model	TravelMate 5720G	2.0GHz MacBook	Inspiron 1520	Compaq 6715b Business Notebook
Rating	★★★	★★★	★★★★★	★★★
Processor	Intel Core 2 Duo T7300	Intel Core 2 Duo T7200	Intel Core 2 Duo T7100	AMD Turion 64 X2 TL-60
Speed	2.0GHz	2.0GHz	1.8GHz	2.0GHz
Memory installed	2GB	1GB	2GB	2GB
Memory slots (free)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)
Max memory	4GB	2GB	4GB	4GB
BIOS	Phoenix	N/A	Dell	HP
Dimensions (HxWxD)	53x368x272mm	37x332x235mm	54x366x277mm	53x362x271mm
Weight	2.9kg	2.3kg	3.1kg	2.8kg
Sound	RealTek HD	SigmaTel HD	SigmaTel HD	SoundMax HD
Pointing device	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad
DISPLAY				
Screen size	15.4in widescreen LCD	13.3in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD
Graphics adaptor	ATI Mobility Radeon X2500	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 950	Nvidia GeForce 8600M GT	ATI Radeon Xpress 1270
Graphics outputs	D-sub, DVI, TV out	Mini DVI	D-sub	D-sub, S-video
Graphics memory	256MB dedicated	224MB shared	256MB dedicated	512MB shared
Native resolution	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,680x1,050
STORAGE				
Hard disk (available)	160GB (139GB)	80GB (74GB)	160GB (146GB)	160GB (149GB)
Optical drive	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD-ROM/CD-RW	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL
Optical drive speeds	LG GSA-T20N (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Matshita CW-8221 (24X CD-R, 16X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	TSST TS-L632D (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	TSST TS-L632D (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 6X DVD-R DL, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)
PORTS AND EXPANSION				
USB2 ports	4	2	4	4
FireWire	1	1	1	1
Infrared port	Yes	No	No	No
Bluetooth	No	Yes	No	Yes
Networking	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11n	10/100, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g
PC card slots	1x ExpressCard/54, 1x CardBus	None	1x ExpressCard/54	1x CardBus
Modem	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Legacy ports	None	None	None	None
Memory card reader	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro, xD	None	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro, xD
Other ports	None	Optical S/PDIF output and input	None	None
MISCELLANEOUS				
Carrying case	No	No	No	No
Direct CD control	No	No	Yes	No
Operating system	Windows Vista Home Premium	MacOS X 10.4	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Business
Operating system restore option	Restore partition	Restore disc	Restore partition	Restore partition
Software included	NTI CD & DVD Maker 7, NTI Shadow 3.7.6.12	Apple iLife 06, Freeverse Big Bang Board Games 2.51, Plasq.com Comic Life 1.24	Microsoft Works 8.0	None
Other standard accessories	Integrated webcam	Remote control, integrated webcam	Integrated webcam, WiFi detector	Integrated fingerprint reader
Optional extras (inc VAT)	None	Mini DVI to DVI adapter £15, Mini DVI to VGA adapter £15, MagSafe Airline Adapter £39, Apple USB modem £35, Extended warranty £199	None	None
BUYING INFORMATION				
Company founded	Notebook division 1985	1977	1984	1939
Employees	Not disclosed	20,186	Not disclosed	140,000
Tech support staff	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Not disclosed	Not disclosed
Tech support times	9am-6pm Mon-Fri	Unknown	8am-8pm Mon-Fri	8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri
Parts and labour warranty	One year collect and return	One year RTB	One year collect and return	One year RTB
Price inc VAT	£650 inc VAT	£695 inc VAT	£749 inc VAT	£680 inc VAT
Price ex VAT	£553	£592	£637	£579
Details	www.acer.co.uk	www.apple.com/uk/macbook	www.dell.co.uk	www.hp.co.uk
Supplier	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	Dell 0870 152 4699	www.hp.co.uk
Part number	LX.TK30X.033	MB061B/A	N0915207T	GB835ET



LENOVO	MESH	PC NEXTDAY	SONY	TOSHIBA
ThinkPad R61 77321EG	PR600	Zoostorm 4-6623 Advanced Premium Laptop	Vaio VGN-FZ19VN	Satellite U300-113
★★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★
Intel Core 2 Duo T7100	Intel Core 2 Duo T7100	Intel Core 2 Duo T7500	Intel Core 2 Duo T7100	Intel Core 2 Duo T5450
1.8GHz	1.8GHz	2.2GHz	1.8GHz	1.66GHz
1GB	2GB	2GB	2GB	1GB
2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)	2 (0)
4GB	2GB	2GB	2GB	4GB
Lenovo	AMI	Phoenix	Phoenix	Toshiba
48x342x245mm	46x365x267mm	48x367x264	45x362x265mm	43x317x238mm
2.4kg	2.6kg	2.8kg	2.6kg	2.0kg
SoundMax HD	RealTek HD	RealTek HD	SigmaTel HD	RealTek HD
Touch pad and touch stick	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad	Touch pad
14.1in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	15.4in widescreen LCD	13.3in widescreen LCD
Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100	Nvidia GeForce Go 8600M GS	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100	Intel Graphics Media Accelerator X3100
D-sub	D-sub, TV out	DVI	D-sub, S-video	D-sub
358MB shared	358MB shared	256MB dedicated	358MB shared	358MB shared
1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800	1,280x800
120GB (106GB)	160GB (143GB)	250GB (232GB)	120GB (102GB)	120GB (110GB)
DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	DVD+/-RW +/-DL
LG GMA-4082N (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 4X DVD+RW, 4X DVD-RW, 24X CD-R, 16X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	LG GSA-T20N (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	TSST SN-S082D (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 6X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 5X DVD-RAM, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Pioneer DVR-K17 (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 6X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)	Matshita UJ-852S (8X DVD+R, 8X DVD-R, 8X DVD+RW, 4X DVD-RW, 4X DVD+R DL, 4X DVD-R DL, 24X CD-R, 24X CD-RW, 16X CD-RW, 8X DVD-ROM, 24X CD-ROM)
3	4	4	3	3
1	1	0	1	1
No	No	No	No	No
No	Yes	No	No	No
10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g	10/100/1,000, 802.11a/b/g	10/100, 802.11b/g	10/100, 802.11a/b/g	10/100, 802.11a/b/g
1x CardBus	1x CardBus	1x ExpressCard/54	1x ExpressCard/34	1x ExpressCard/54
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
None	None	None	None	None
Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick Pro	Secure Digital, MultiMedia Card, Memory Stick, xD
Port replicator for docking station	None	Optical S/PDIF	None	None
No	No	No	No	No
No	No	No	No	No
Windows Vista Business	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Home Premium	Windows Vista Business	Windows Vista Home Premium
Windows disc	Restore disc	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore disc
Diskeeper 9.0 Home Edition, Norton Internet Security 2007	CyberLink PowerDVD 7, CyberLink PowerProducer 3, CyberLink Power2Go 5, Microsoft Works 8.5	Ahead Nero Essentials 7	Adobe Acrobat Standard 8, Adobe Photoshop Elements 5, Adobe Premiere Elements 3, InterVideo WinDVD 8.0 for VAIO, Roxio Easy Media Creator 9, Sony Click to DVD 2.6, Sony SonicStageCP 4.2, Sony SonicStage Mastering Studio 2.3, Sony VAIO Photo & Video Suite, Microsoft Works 8.5	None
None	Integrated 1.3 megapixel webcam, USB mouse	None	Integrated webcam	Integrated 1.3 megapixel webcam
None	None	None	None	None
1984	1987	1993	1946	1985
19,000	Not disclosed	75	162,000	Not disclosed
42	4	25	40	Not disclosed
9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri	9am-5pm Mon-Fri	9am-6pm Mon-Fri	9am-6pm Mon-Fri	8am-6pm Mon-Fri
One year customer carry-in	Two years collect and return	One year RTB	One year collect and return	One year collect and return
£700 inc VAT	£749 inc VAT	£699 inc VAT	£750 inc VAT	£700 inc VAT
£596	£637	£595	£638	£596
www.lenovo.com/uk	www.meshcomputers.com	www.pcnextday.co.uk	http://vaio.sony.co.uk	http://uk.computers.toshiba-europe.com
www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	Mesh 0844 736 0440	www.pcnextday.co.uk	www.laptopsdirect.co.uk	www.askdirect.co.uk
NA01EUK	PR600	Zoostorm 4-6623	VGNFZ19VN.CEK	PSU30E-01T029EN